

**THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE  
HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS  
AND OTHER NON GOVERNMENT  
ORGANISATIONS**

**SUBMISSION IN REPLY TO SUBMISSION OF FR  
KEVIN DILLON**

**BY PETER O'CALLAGHAN QC  
INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER**

## INTRODUCTION

1. Father Kevin Dillon provided a Submission to the Parliamentary Committee on October 4, 2012. This was published on the Committee's website on or about 15 February 2013. On that day Fr Dillon gave evidence to the Committee, to which I have made a Submission in Reply, which was provided to the Committee on 26 July 2013. In this Submission in Reply I set out extracts from Fr Dillon's Submission in italics, and my comments thereto.
2. *"It was hurriedly introduced under pressure from the State Government, therefore there was totally inadequate preparation". (Paragraph (a) of Summary)*

### COMMENT:

Whilst it might fairly be said that the *Melbourne Response* upon the initiative of Archbishop Pell was speedily introduced, it by no means follows that there was inadequate preparation. That there was extensive preparation is evidenced in my Reply to the Police Submission, where I refer to the correspondence between Assistant Commissioner Gavin Brown and the Archdiocese.

3. *"There is no true 'independence' in the role of the 'Independent Commissioner' he is a 'delegate' of the Archbishop of Melbourne": (Paragraph (c) of Summary)*

### COMMENT:

- (a) I have already dealt with this in my Reply to the Police Submission. (paragraph 73)
- (b) For convenience, I set out part of paragraph 73 in my Reply to the Police Submission.

*"The nub of the criticism is that the Independent Commissioner is inclined to favour the interests of the Church when carrying out his duties. There is not a single item of evidence that suggests this is so. There is much evidence that proves it is wrong. As to the perception of a lack of independence, the argument rises no higher than to point to*

*the fact that the Independent Commissioner is paid by the Church. For the reasons set out above, that argument has no more force than to contend that there is inevitably a perception that a Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria will favour the interests of the State because he or she is paid by the State. The criticism implies that I am a participant in a charade in which I am appointed the Independent Commissioner but in reality am a cat's paw of my appointor ie. I will do what they say or not do anything which will upset. This is as false as it is offensive".*

I have also attached an article by my fellow Independent Commissioner, Mr Jeff Gleeson SC, published in the July 2013 edition of the Law Institute Journal titled "Have a Little Faith in the Profession".

4. *"It is my belief that the 'Melbourne Response' and 'Towards Healing' (at least in Victoria) should be abandoned and the community via the elected Government should (Summary)*
  - (a) *investigate the alleged crimes as it would other crimes ie. via a proper Police investigation".*

**COMMENT:**

- (a) The advent of the *Melbourne Response* and *Towards Healing* should not be assumed (as Fr Dillon appears to do) to have limited Police investigation of crimes. Instead, the establishment of the *Melbourne Response* has meant that victims of sexual abuse who had not previously taken their complaints to the Police, have, in a number of cases having been advised of their right to and encouraged to report to the Police, taken their complaints to the Police. Those victims had been sexually abused many years before 1996 but they had not taken their complaints to the Police and it can be safely assumed would not have done so had it not been for the introduction of the *Melbourne Response*. The criticism

also fails to recognise that many of the offenders are long deceased and therefore their conduct cannot be subject to any meaningful police investigation.

- (b) I do not deal with all of Fr Dillon's assertions because they have been replied to elsewhere, or cannot be, because of the lack of particularity. Suffice to say that I reject the contention that the *Melbourne Response* has not appropriately dealt with complaints of sexual abuse.
5. *"Over the past five years I have had consistent contact with many established victims of (Catholic) church related abuse currently 30 in number. My reflections in this Submission are based on my listening to their experiences of both the Melbourne Response (the majority) and Towards Healing (the minority). Sadly, but importantly, I have yet to hear one victim speak positively of their experience with either Church process". (S1)*

**COMMENT:**

I acknowledge that Fr Dillon for many years has been a strong and consistent advocate for victims and that he has personally supported a number of them. However, unless we know the identity of these dissatisfied victims who have contacted Fr Dillon, it is impossible to provide a meaningful response. Fr Dillon does not attempt to identify, even by pseudonym, these dissatisfied victims. I cannot understand why Fr Dillon has not approached me, and described in chapter and verse what these dissatisfied victims are saying. I would have thought it incumbent upon a Parish Priest fixed with relevant knowledge to take it up with the Independent Commissioner. Fr Dillon had contacted me early in the process as I refer to below.

6. *"This Submission is restricted to an evaluation of 'Melbourne Response', from perspective of*
- (a) *The established victims who have 'utilised' the Melbourne Response process with many of whom I have had lengthy and consistent contact over several years;*

- (b) *My personal reaction as a Catholic, as a Priest and simply as a person;*
- (c) *The general reaction of the public especially those who are practising Catholics and have an affinity with and loyalty to the official Church.” (S4)*

**COMMENT:**

- (a) Shortly after I was appointed the Independent Commissioner, and following a request from Fr Dillon, I met with Fr Dillon, Fr [REDACTED] and another priest whose name I cannot remember. My recollection is that the meeting took place at Mitcham. The concerns of those priests at that time was what they saw as the potential serious prejudice to priests who could be placed on administrative leave. They rightly perceived that if a priest was placed on administrative leave because of an investigation into possible sexual abuse, that priest’s reputation would probably be irremediably and indelibly damaged. In a lengthy discussion I agreed with that proposition, acknowledging that even in a case in which the priest is so placed on administrative leave then had his faculties restored because the complaint was not established, his reputation would be affected as aforesaid;
- (b) But against that must be balanced the paramount duty to ensure that persons are protected from sexual abuse. I pointed to the care which I needed to have in making any such recommendation. Generally speaking, the three priests accepted what was said, though with some reservation.
- (c) At that time neither Fr Dillon nor anyone else complained that the *Melbourne Response* was introduced without adequate preparation. I was not the agent of Archbishop Pell, I was his delegate appointed under Canon Law and as such I was to and have acted independently of my appointor, in just the same way as I

have complied with the Terms and Conditions of my Appointment independently of my appointor.

7. *"In addition, over time the question has arisen in the minds of many people as to how, even with the best of intentions, a person who is a 'cradle Catholic' and who has given long service to the Church in a variety of capacities, can be termed 'independent'". (S4)*

**COMMENT:**

I was undoubtedly born a Catholic, as was Kevin Dillon. But I am quite unaware of having 'given long service to the Church in a variety of capacities'. My only professional connection with the Archdiocese of Melbourne prior to my appointment in 1996 as an Independent Commissioner has been as an adviser in relation to clerical sexual abuse. I have no doubt such services first sought by Archbishop Little were in the belief that I (as any barrister in that position) would provide dispassionate and independent advice, in no way coloured by or reflecting the fact that I am Catholic. For the record, I had but briefly met Archbishop Pell on one occasion before I was asked by his solicitors to accept the retainer to act as Independent Commissioner. That brief meeting was as a fellow guest at a wedding. Even if I had given long service to the Church, which is not the fact, this would not have prevented me or any other barrister from acting independently.

8. *"Many people including victims presenting themselves to the Melbourne Response, mistakenly believe they are approaching an independent Government appointee, after the example of a Royal Commissioner". (S4)*

**COMMENT:**

I have never represented myself as being appointed a Royal Commissioner and because I have always explained the role I am to perform, I find it impossible to believe that many people thought they were approaching a Government appointee. My files which contain transcripts of

my meetings with victims confirm this to be the case. My role is analogous to that of a Royal Commissioner appointed by a Government, in the sense that the Archdiocese is the Government rather than a Government as such. Some victims have enquired if I represent the Archdiocese and I have emphasised that I do not, but am independent of my appointor, in precisely the same way as a Royal Commissioner is independent of his or her appointor. Victoria Police have engaged in similar misconceptions to that of Fr Dillon, challenging my independence because I am paid for my professional services by the Archdiocese. It would likewise absurdly follow that in Chairing the Board of Inquiry into matters concerning the Anglican Archdiocese of Brisbane's handling of sexual abuse complaints, I was not independent because I was paid by the Archdiocese of Brisbane. These allegations about independence are baseless. *“Even acknowledging that the Independent Commissioner's attitude to 'his Commission' may have been intended at the outset to be as genuinely 'independent' as he could make it. Given his personal commitment to the Catholic faith, the task to remain 'independent' let alone be seen to be independent, has surely become more difficult as his work has continued over 16 unbroken years”.* (S4)

**COMMENT:**

If, as I was, independent at the time of my appointment, it is absurd to suggest that I ceased thereafter to be independent because my role has continued for 16 years (now almost 17 years). How can my present commitment to the Catholic faith make it difficult for me to identify and deal with the evil of clerical child sexual abuse, anymore than it precludes Cardinal Pell, Archbishop Hart and indeed Fr Dillon from condemning this evil? The fact that I have found nearly all complaints established, thus entitling those complainants to free counselling and psychological support and an apology is it suggested that if an atheist had been appointed as Independent Commissioner he would have conducted himself differently to how I have. To any rational person the answer is obviously no.

9. *"It is reported that the complaints of over 300 victims have been accepted under the Melbourne Response yet none of the 30 victims with whom I have contact, have indicated that any attempt was made after they had signed the Deed of Release to ascertain their opinion and experience – good or bad, positive or negative – of the process they had just completed".*  
(S5)

**COMMENT:**

- (a) It is important to keep in mind the particular role of an Independent Commissioner. Once it has been accepted that the complaint is established, and the victim (as the case may be) is referred to Carelink and the Compensation Panel, in the strict sense my role has been completed. True it is that I have continued to have contact with some victims because of particular circumstances. Further, many of those victims express their gratitude to me for having believed that their complaint of sexual abuse was established. I understand that a significant number of victims have continued to be seen by Carelink, and will for as long as there is necessity for doing so. I add that I have enquired of Carelink on numerous occasions as to victim's reactions to my having dealt with their complaints. I am glad to say that I have been told their reactions have been most favourable.
10. *"The Independent Commissioner has acknowledged that his investigation normally takes one week only, and that ninety-five percent of complaints are upheld. This has meant that even clergy have expressed concerns of the fairness of the process, following many years of denial by Church authorities of sexual abuse being perpetrated by priests and religious, with known offenders being moved from Parish to Parish rather than being subject to Police investigation. They fear that the process may have been 'over corrected, with an adequate investigation by untrained investigator'. So the absence of any external and ongoing review raises serious doubts that genuine justice both for victims and alleged offenders, is being served".* (S5)



**COMMENT:**

- (a) This is perplexing. Is Fr Dillon saying that he and others are concerned, that I have wrongly found that offenders have perpetrated sexual abuse, when they have not? What otherwise is he saying?
- (b) *Investigation 'normally takes one week only' is apparently taken from my letter to the Herald Sun (Attachment 82 to Fr Dillon's Submission) where I said:*
- 'The great majority of the complainants who have met with me detail their complaints, and a week or so later have been formally advised that I have found that they were sexually abused in the manner described by them and that I will refer them to Carelink and the Compensation Panel'.*
- (c) My aim is always to deal with complaints as expeditiously as possible, while respecting the rights of the accused. The great majority of complaints I receive are complaints made in respect of a priest who was already convicted of having abused the victim or of substantially similar offences. Other victims included in those complaints are those in respect of whom the offender is dead, or complaints of abuse have previously been upheld by an Independent Commissioner, and in respect of which relevant evidence has already been obtained. In these circumstances it is often possible to deal with the complaint more quickly. There are, of course, other investigations which take longer because, for instance, the alleged offender has denied the complaint. In this limited class of complaints, the requirement to conduct a hearing means that the complaint is not resolved for a significant period. Similarly where a detailed investigation is necessary, more time will be required.
- (d) During my time as Independent Commissioner there has been no instance of known offenders being moved from Parish to Parish. Every recommendation I have made to

remove the faculties of a priest whom I have found to have in child sexual abuse has been accepted and implemented by the Archbishop, and accordingly they have no longer acted as priests. I deny my investigations were inadequate and that I am an untrained investigator.

11. *"The Archdiocese has frequently claimed that the majority of victims are happy with and have benefited from 'the Melbourne Response' but I suggest not one shred of evidence to suggest this has ever been produced". (S6)"*

**COMMENT:**

I am not aware of the Archdiocese ever having claimed that victims are "happy" with the *Melbourne Response*. I otherwise repeat in part what I said in my Submission in Reply to the Transcript of Helen Last and others (P 14).

"There are a number of victims who have expressed in writing their satisfaction with the process. There are many others who have expressly and impliedly conveyed this orally. I am aware that my fellow Independent Commissioner Mr Jeff Gleeson SC has provided the Committee with the names of some of these victims. This is not to say that all people are happy in the same way that a patient may express his or her gratitude to the doctor for treating the cancer. It would be a misnomer to say such patient is happy. Grateful for treatment no doubt, but continually unhappy because of being visited with cancer. Similarly, whilst many victims are relieved to have been able to disclose the deplorable abuse they suffered, and have received psychological support, compensation and apology, the one thing they can never be happy about is that they were subject to sexual abuse which can never be forgotten and remains a continuing blight on their lives."

12. *"The first contact with the 'Melbourne Response' is an interview by a Queen's Counsel in his Chambers. It is hard to think of a more intimidating starting point for a process which it has taken many victims some decades to initiate".*

**COMMENT:**

- (a) Let me say at once that I have no doubt that many victims find it a burden to recount the fact of and the details of the abuse. Typically, I am contacted by the victim personally, though there are cases when I am contacted by someone of their behalf eg. their lawyer. In almost all cases I meet with the victim and have them tell me about their complaint in a conversation which is usually recorded. I am confident that the great majority of victims I have seen, whilst dealing with a difficult subject, would not have regarded my interview as intimidating. Since I read Fr Dillon's submission, I have at the conclusion of my interview with victims asked whether they felt intimidated by meeting with me. None have suggested this was so but rather the contrary. With respect, I wonder whether Fr Dillon appreciates the meaning of intimidate. Intimidate has been defined as
- (i) "to make timid; fill with fear.
  - (ii) to coerce or inhibit by or as by threats.
  - (iii) frighten or overawe (someone), especially in order to make them do what one wants". (New Oxford Dictionary of English)
  - (iv) intimidation (also called cowing) is intentional behaviour that 'would cause a person of ordinary sensibilities fear of injury or harm.
  - (v) It is not necessary to prove that the behaviour was so violent as to cause terror or that the victim was actually frightened. (Wikipedia)

- (vi) to render timid, inspire with fear, to overawe, cow; in modern use esp. to force to or to deter from some action by threats or violence.
- (b) In interviewing victims, I endeavour and I feel I succeed, in making the victim feel at ease. Over the years I have conducted a wide general legal practice as a member of the Victorian Bar. This has required me to interview and confer with myriad clients in respect of criminal, civil, family, licensing, planning and other matters. I stress that I am not unique, and the capacity that I have for empathetically and compassionately conferring with victims, could be mirrored in the capacities of Counsel at the Victorian Bar. This is why many entities, when seeking to investigate issues which have arisen in the governance of that entity, brief a QC to independently appraise relevant issues and report to his or her appointor. Not infrequently the answers that such Counsel provide to the questions asked are not the answers which the appointor wished to hear, but that is common place. The independent lawyer gives his or her opinion or findings without fear or favour. The fact that the lawyer in question is paid a substantial fee by the appointor in no way detracts from his independence and autonomy. Fr Dillon is critical of my lack of independence, but does not point to any example of my being partial to the position of the Archdiocese, rather than being impartial to both parties, namely the complainant and the alleged offender.

13. *"The suitability, capacity and ability of a Church delegated lawyer to investigate allegations of criminal actions and behaviours. Justice and fairness to both the complainant and the alleged offender are not served unless the investigation is carried out by experienced and qualified investigators whose independence is totally evident and transparent" (P7)*

**COMMENT:**

- (a) Once again, Fr Dillon's perception of delegation is flawed. A delegate is not an agent of the appointor but one chosen to carry out the Terms and Conditions of his Appointment.

It followed naturally, that the Archbishop would have to appoint someone to carry out an independent investigation of complaints of sexual abuse against clergy and others within the definition of church persons. When I was appointed to Chair a Board of Inquiry into the question of whether the Anglican Archdiocese of Brisbane had handled past complaints of sexual abuse fairly, reasonably and appropriately, that Board of Inquiry was bound to act judicially and impartially in deciding those issues. That Board's independence (I repeat) was in no way detracted from by reason of the fees of its members being paid by that Archdiocese. That is precisely the same situation which applies to the Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese and the Independent Commissioners.

#### CONCLUSION

With respect much of the Submissions by Fr Dillon are misconceived and mistaken. They should not be accepted by the Committee. But that I have not responded to all the assertions of Fr Dillon, must not be taken as my agreeing to those assertions.



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Peter J O'Callaghan QC

31<sup>st</sup> July 2013

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# A SPORTING CHANCE

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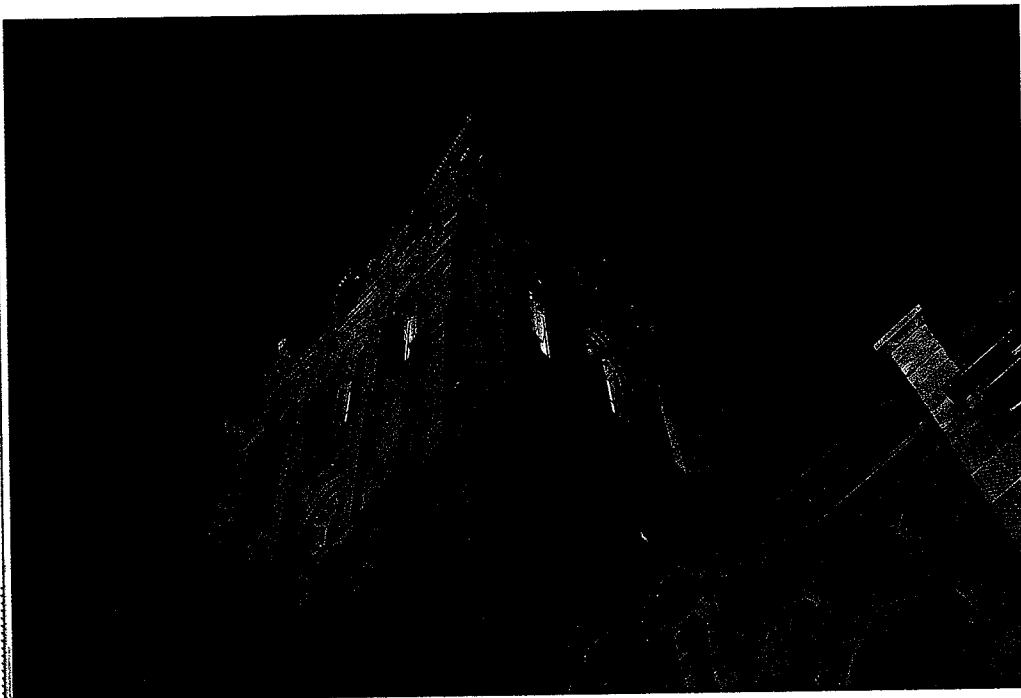


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JULY 2013

# Have a little faith in the profession

Criticism of the role of lawyers in the process of supporting victims of sexual abuse through the Catholic Church's Melbourne Response has been ill-informed, writes **Jeff Gleeson SC**.



**L**awyers perform important roles in dealing with allegations of sexual abuse. In recent times there has been considerable attention given to the manner in which allegations of sexual abuse have been dealt with by the Catholic Church. Scrutiny and criticism of the roles performed by lawyers is necessary and appropriate. On occasion, however, criticism of the role of lawyers in the process has been ill-informed. It is important that the legal profession and the public generally have a clear understanding of the relevant facts.

The Melbourne Response is a process established in 1996 by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to investigate allegations of sexual and other abuse. It has four components: the investigation by an independent commissioner of complaints of sexual and other abuse; counselling and professional support administered by and funded through

Carelink; a compensation panel that provides compensation and pastoral support to victims; and parish pastoral support.

Peter O'Callaghan QC was the first independent commissioner and I was appointed as the second independent commissioner in 2012, after 16 years as counsel assisting the independent commissioner.

## Reporting to police

Many complaints made to the independent commissioners concern an offender who is dead, who has already been convicted, or in respect of whom the complainant has already reported the matter to the police. Even if that is not the case, many complainants do not want to report the matter to the police. Nonetheless, those complainants are informed of their right to report their abuse to the police, and we encourage them to do so.

Sometimes, but not often, the complainant then states that they do wish to report the matter to the police and the independent commissioner will make the necessary arrangements for that to occur. More typically, the complainant insists that they do not wish to report the matter to the police. Sometimes they say why. Usually it is a concern for privacy or a concern about being involved in a criminal trial. Regardless of the views of the independent commissioner about the desirability of a sex abuser being convicted, the wishes of the complainant are respected and in those circumstances no report is made to the police.

Where a victim declines to go to the police, the Melbourne Response provides a means for their complaint to be independently examined, so that if established, they receive validation, an apology from the Church and access to compensation and ongoing counselling and treatment.

## Independence

The Melbourne Response is independent of the Church. The independent commissioner's terms of appointment, which were endorsed by Victoria Police at the time of Peter O'Callaghan's appointment and again in 2011, expressly state that the independent commissioner is independent. The Carelink counselling service and the compensation panel also operate independently of the Church.

The Archdiocese appoints us and we then act independently to investigate and make findings and recommendations to the Archbishop.

Since the Melbourne Response began 17 years ago, there have been 330 complaints made of sexual and other abuse of children, almost all of which occurred more than 20 years ago. Of the more than 310 that have been determined at the time of writing, nearly all (in the order of 97 per cent) have been upheld.

The Archbishop has acted on our recommendations on every occasion.

We are paid by the Archdiocese and because of this, it is sometimes claimed that we are not independent. That is not correct and it is a significant and unwarranted slur on our professional reputation and integrity.

Our terms of appointment, our ethical obligations as members of the Bar, and the facts of our findings confirm our independence. Members of the legal profession are entitled to feel concerned that it is suggested that payment precludes independence. The judiciary are paid by the state. Royal commissioners are paid by the state. Lawyers appointed to conduct inquiries into corporations or other institutions are frequently paid by those appointing them. The fact of payment does not prevent judges, royal commissioners and lawyers independently appointed from performing an independent role.

## The process

For the victim, the approach is non-adversarial. Victims are not required to be represented by a lawyer, although they are entitled to have one. They can also have any other support person accompany them through the process, and they receive counselling support through Carelink, at no cost to the victim.

The initial discussion with a complainant is recorded, with their consent, and the complainant can then modify or add to the transcript. It has been said that recounting the circumstances of the abuse re-traumatizes victims. There is no doubt that this part of the process is very difficult for most complainants. Their stories are desperately sad and the impact on them is palpable, but this part of the process is necessary.

It should be understood that in our experience complainants do not want blind acceptance of any allegation that is made. They want to tell their story, they want to be listened to by an independent person and they want to be believed. Our responsibility is to determine the facts in respect of an allegation and at all times Peter O'Callaghan and I endeavour to treat the complainants with respect, dignity and compassion. I am pleased to say that many complainants have said that this is what they received.

Once sufficient details of the complaint have been provided, the relevant allegations are then put to the accused where this is called for by natural justice.

If the accused is still in active ministry, and if the complaint of sexual abuse appears valid, we recommend immediately to the Archbishop that the accused be placed on administrative leave and suspended from performing any duties that would put them in a position where they might offend again. If the complaint is upheld, the recommendation to the Archbishop is that the suspension continues and the priest can no longer act as a priest.

The Archbishop has always acted on these recommendations.

## Most cases are uncontested

Most cases relate to priests who are deceased or who have already been dealt with by the police, either in relation to the applicant's complaint or the complaints of others. In these cases, only limited investigation is required to determine the validity of the complaint.

Where the allegations are denied by the accused, we conduct a confidential hearing with the relevant parties. Both the complainant and the accused are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement that prevents them from disclosing what is said at the hearing. It does not prevent the complainant from discussing the details of the abuse with anyone.

The confidentiality of the hearing process is important. It provides protection for a victim who has been encouraged to go to the police but declined to do so. It also creates an environment that encourages an offender to admit wrongdoing.

In our experience, the process of recording a victim's allegations, investigating them and, where possible, validating them and telling the victim that we believe them, is a milestone event for many.

Only 16 of the 300-plus cases we have heard have resulted in a contested hearing. Fourteen of these were upheld. Of the 14 upheld, one involved child physical abuse and the other 13 involved child sexual abuse (10 physical and three psychological sexual abuse).

## The compensation panel

Once an independent commissioner has upheld a complaint, victims are referred to an independent, four-member compensation panel, which is chaired by David Curtain QC. Also on the panel are a well respected solicitor/mediator, a practising psychiatrist and a retired pharmacist.

The panel operates informally. Victims can have legal representation if they wish, and can be accompanied by other support people. Neither the Archdiocese nor its insurer is represented before the panel. As such, the process is not adversarial.

The panel hears from the victim, considers the supporting material on which the victim wishes to rely - which almost always includes a medical report - and then makes its decision.

The assessment by the panel is binding on the Archbishop, and it can offer compensation up to a limit of \$75,000. This limit is significantly more than victims can receive under the Victorian Government's victims of crime compensation scheme. Victims are also entitled to receive counselling and support through Carelink for as long as needed, at no cost to the victim.

If the compensation offer is not accepted, the proceedings before the panel are without prejudice, but there are no other confidentiality obligations. Regardless of the outcome, there are no obligations imposed on the victim preventing any discussion of the abuse, including reference to the offender or criticism of the Church. Recipients of compensation are not required to and do not enter into a confidentiality agreement.

## Ongoing role of the Melbourne Response

The Melbourne Response continues to play an important role in dealing with allegations of sexual abuse. Since 1 July 2012, during which period the Victorian parliamentary inquiry has been conducted and the royal commission has been announced and has commenced, victims have continued to approach the Melbourne Response. In that time the Melbourne Response has received approximately 20 complaints (mostly relating to abuse alleged to have occurred in the period between 1940 and 1980).

## Response of victims

The overwhelming majority of victims tell us they feel a sense of release from having talked about something that they have been bottling up for years or even decades. They talk about the sense of validation they get when they have told their story: that someone has sat and listened to them, that they have been questioned and tested on aspects of their story - and that they have been believed. However, it is unfortunately true in many cases that no matter how solicitously the victim is treated and compensated, nothing can eradicate the fact of the deplorable abuse which continues to impact on the victim.

There has been criticism of the independent commissioner process as "in house" and part of a cover-up. This is simply untrue. Neither Peter O'Callaghan nor I would countenance being involved in a process that had either the purpose or effect of protecting sex abusers or protecting the Catholic Church in respect of complaints of sexual abuse. For too long the Catholic Church and other institutions did too little to address the problem of sexual abuse. Now that it is addressing the problem it is important that the roles of those who are involved in the process are fairly and reasonably considered. We look to the Victorian parliamentary inquiry and to the royal commission to restore accuracy and balance to the debate, and to make productive recommendations to further enhance the prevention of future abuse and healing for victims. ●

JEFF GLEESON SC is an independent commissioner for the Catholic Church's Melbourne Response to abuse by clergy.